

another nationality will not request us to add its language to the two others? We could, without any fear, show them the act to which I have just referred and which made Sir John A. Macdonald state, in 1890:

We have now a constitution which places all British subjects on an absolute equal footing, guaranteeing them the same rights as regards language, religion, property and individual rights.

One too often forgets that it was not the conquest which made of geographical Canada a political state; but that it was rather the wish of the two contracting parties, having nothing in common from the ethnical viewpoint, uniting, nevertheless, for a definite purpose, with the understanding that the characteristics, the national customs, of each race would be faithfully adhered to. The provinces existed before the dominion and it is with their co-operation that confederation was organized. Therefore, we may conclude that, even if the provisions of the act were silent in this respect, we would have to adhere entirely to the rights and privileges acquired at the time of the pact.

In 1867, all admitted that Canadians of French extraction had safeguarded their rights to the existence, the use and continuance of their language, and that it would be impossible in the future, either by deceit or force to blot them out as a distinct nationality or prohibit the use of their language.

The proof? You will find it not only throughout our rural districts, in the marvellous development of our schools and universities, faithful guardians and champions of our language, arts, literature, and our agricultural and industrial expansion, but you will especially find it in the recognition, without dispute, of the official acts of the British government in this country, since 1759.

Mr. ST-PERE (Translation): Let us vote!

Mr. DORION (Translation): "Superiority in arms and numbers does not entitle a nation to force its language on another people," was the statement by Mr. Etienne Lamy, in the city of Quebec, in 1912. The hon. member for Labelle (Mr. Bourassa)—to whom I wish to particularly express my gratitude for the battles he has waged in the defence of the rights of our language in this country—thus expressed himself in 1915:

At all periods of the world's history, most of the conquerors recognized the right of vanquished people to the use and preservation of their language.

Is it not the acknowledgment of this principle that we find in the act of the capitulation of Quebec, of which section 2

stipulated that the inhabitants are continued in the possession of their houses, property, chattels and "privileges." Moreover, section 42 of the capitulation of Montreal stipulates that the French and Canadians will continue to be governed according to the customs prevailing in this country. What other definition can be given to the word "privileges" if it is not the use and preservation of their national language?

Later, the Quebec Act of 1774 decreed that the Canadians could continue in possession and the enjoyment of their property, goods and chattels, and of their usages and customs as well as of their other civil rights.

The constitution of 1791, although creating two provinces, upper and lower Canada, makes no changes in the Act of 1774. It is, moreover, in keeping with that spirit—the spirit of the Quebec Act—that the instructions of Lord Grenville, Secretary to the Colonies, were given to Lord Dorchester, Governor General of Canada.

Mr. SEGUIN (Translation): Will the hon. member allow me a question?

Mr. DORION (Translation): Yes.

Mr. SEGUIN (Translation): Is it not a fact that the hon. member would render a greater service to bilingualism by allowing a vote to be taken than by continuing his speech.

Mr. GOBEIL (Translation): What a lot of jokers!

Mr. DORION (Translation): It is, therefore, undeniable that under all political regimes, since the conquest, the use of the French language has been recognized and its practice observed in all fields of national activities, even as regards our currency. If it be so recognized and if it should continue to be, the principle should apply all round, without exception. Is there anything which brings out more the ethical duality of this nation, the mutual respect of one race for another, the broadmindedness of the two, than the use of the two official languages on currency?

Our country, bilingual in the eyes of the law and the constitution, must equally be so in the eyes of a foreigner. It is, I repeat it, one of the fundamental principles on which confederation rests; this principle of equality between the two languages, establishes, therefore, not only its use in this parliament or before the courts, but also in all activities of our national life.

The French element in this country comprises about 30 per cent of the entire population. Almost one-fourth of Canada's wealth is located in Quebec.